

## Gender Policy

### Woord en Daad Foundation

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Woord en Daad Foundation, a Dutch (Christian) NGO, connects people worldwide. We contribute to dignified lives, hope, and opportunities to overcome poverty by cooperating with local partners and actors from relevant sectors. In working with Gender, Woord en Daad recognizes that, in order to offer equal opportunities to both women and men, there is need to address the root causes of gender inequality such as regressive policies, [negative social norms and practices that keep women and girls in poverty and at the margins of development](#). Our vision on 'Gender' is closely linked with our core values and has always been a vision on 'Gender and Family'. This means we strive for equally valuable outcomes for men and women with due attention for equal treatment as well as with respect for family structures and other meaningful relationships.

### Purpose of the Gender Policy

This Gender Policy translates the vision into practice, so that Woord en Daad can realize its vision on 'Gender'. The policy will also provide a framework upon which all staff will be accountable and against which Woord en Daad will audit itself on consistency to gender principles, policies and practices.

### Organizational values and gender

'Gender and Family' within Woord en Daad

Five core values can be derived from our mission, vision and strategy. These guide our choices at various levels and determine our policy. With 'Gender and Family' we apply these core values to the level of our target group: individual men, women, boys, and girls, and their most important relations.

Our five core values are:

- Co-responsibility – Responsible for yourself, your neighbour and creation
- Fellow creature – Creature of God, equal and unique
- Compassion – Close to and alongside people who suffer
- Stewardship – Treating human beings, resources and the environment with care
- Interdependence – Independent in choices, dependent in collaboration

Our Gender Policy is a concrete application of our core value 'Fellow Creature': Man and woman together have been created in the image of God.<sup>1</sup> Thus, they are of equal value and represent complementing qualities. Men and women complement one another in freedom and carry mutual responsibility (core values: 'Interdependence' and 'Co-responsibility'). In our efforts for development, we thus aim for a partnership between men and women. And, for this partnership between men and women to happen, there have to be reduced gender disparities and transformed gender relations, to which Woord en Daad through this gender policy reaffirms its commitment.

'Gender', for us, includes how different cultures and society look at 'masculinity' or 'femininity' in terms of roles and responsibilities. Next to the biological differences between men and women, cultures have their vision on the relationships between the sexes, on roles and on what is appropriate. These visions impact people's influence on decision making and roles in relationships. In the face of this reality, Woord en Daad focuses on value-based systemic change. The Biblical appeal to male and female leaders, is to serve justice and promote the position of the weaker in society (in Biblical terms: the poor, strangers, widows and orphans). In other words: servant leadership.

Woord en Daad in the 2021-2025 policy focuses on three policy themes: Value-based Systemic Change, Pro-Poor Climate Resilience, and Reaching the Unreached. Gender is an aspect to all three themes, and especially has a place under Reaching the Unreached. We have experienced in previous years that reaching women and girls to the point of equality requires strong, specific strategies. Gender tools and methods also contribute strongly to the Reaching the Unreached strategy, as many of them can be applied to people living in remote areas, reaching the poorest of the poor, and disability inclusion.

Our gender policy aim is transformation and connection between people and institutions with the aim of transformative change. In the process, we evaluate and identify formal and informal, personal and structural aspects to the needs and experiences of men and women, boys and girls of various social positions, so that all can profit equally.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:27

When it comes to gender, we experience the importance of family. Whether people grow up in a supporting family or without a supporting family, influences development, security, (un)equal opportunities and (un)equal treatment. Families also influence the future: grown-ups will start new families and take important values from their own upbringing with them. Families are building blocks for society and training centers of our social life at the same time. Woord en Daad strives for strong families and communities in which people may grow up and flourish. Ultimately, we pray that individual members of such families and communities may be a blessing for those around them.

'Gender' in development cooperation is not primarily answering to girls' and women's individual position and needs. Rather, we will address Gender starting from relationships between men and women, boys and girls within the context of their families and communities. Naturally, we will come across and discuss social patterns within these communities. Thus, we combine 'Gender and Family'. In implementing this policy, we want to secure equal opportunities for men and women and apply different approaches to effectively reach the most marginalized groups, with specific attention for women.

### **Gender Policy Pointers**

Woord en Daad's goal for child, man or woman is that they will build a self-sustaining livelihood and have a positive impact on relationships around them. Thus, we connect people from all over the world in their fight against poverty. Our vision expresses how man and woman are equal and as God's creations should be treated equally in similar situations. Within our programmes, we strive to pay due attention to the consequences of policies and practices upon men's and women's positions and equality in relationships. Women and girls are often more deprived from resources and decision making in society, even though they are important for their communities' future. When women can read, so will their children. If these women show leadership and participate in decision making, this has positive consequences for all of the community, including the men.

Woord en Daad applies the following Gender policy pointers:

- Woord en Daad acknowledges the importance of family structure on individual and social development and wants to embed families in its programmes and projects;<sup>2</sup>
- 'Gender' in development is not solely focusing on women and girls, but addresses the basis of relationships between men and women, boys, and girls in the context of their families and communities;
- Woord en Daad respects differences in culture when we have conversations about social patterns, looking for positive activating relationships between men and women;
- All people, regardless of sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability or social position are treated with equal dignity, if possible in mutual responsibility and freedom;
- Situations that specifically threaten or hurt women and girls, or men and boys are to be discussed in an open dialogue, with the aim to improve mutual relations as well as to promote improving the position of the group at stake;
- Woord en Daad denounces all forms of violence, including 'culture-specific' forms of gender-specific violence and will take a position against violence in its projects;
- Woord en Daad is working on behavioural change as discussed in this gender policy, and seeks an open dialogue. In this dialogue, Woord en Daad pays due attention to cultural context and (power) structures;<sup>3</sup>
- Woord en Daad will apply different gender strategies and approaches adapted to different socio-cultural contexts in order to challenge structures perpetuating gender inequalities.
- Woord en Daad wants to work with gender in a transformative way. This means Woord en Daad strives for sustainable, positive change in the lives of people in a project area. Should such a change require behaviour or mindset change, we want to work towards it together with the people.
- We acknowledge we are doing our work in a broken world, in the light of the coming Kingdom. Real transformation is a long-term process which mostly exceeds the duration of a single project. This may require due attention to gender dynamics in series of sequencing

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<sup>2</sup> Intern Beleidsplan Woord en Daad 2016-2020, Versie 29 Mei 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Triple loop learning/ deep reflection, zie hs 3 'Als de tak wil bloeien'.

projects. At the same time, we are pressed to acknowledge that when we succeed, it is by God's grace alone.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Applicable/minimum requirements of this policy**

- We build partnerships on gender equality
- Adequate resources are allocated to gender strategies
- Integrate measures, behaviors in the projects
- individual staff understand and demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that promote gender equality
- Reflection: (provide a brave and safe space) to have reflections on gender
- Monitoring and evaluation: we collect (disaggregated) data which enables us to check whether we are making progress on the subject of gender equality
- Adaptive learning is used to promote gender equality

#### **Delivery of the policy**

This section outlines the framework for the implementation of the gender policy. It provides guidelines on the responsibility of different parts of the organisation for the achievement of gender equality as follows:

- The Reaching Unreached team, especially the gender experts, will be accountable for the implementation of this policy. The CEO / HR will be accountable to put in place all organizational mechanisms (including gender expert positions necessary for implementation of the policy).
- The project pool staff and (or including) country representatives will be responsible for implementation of all related strategies and actions of the policy in projects and partnerships;
- HRM will be responsible for implementation of all related strategies and actions in case they are related to staff and/or internal organizational matters ;
- All managing, project pool and communication staff will be expected to show a gender perspective in their work.

This policy will be reviewed after every two years and Woord en Daad will audit itself to assess level of progress.

## **1. Glossary**

### **Family**

Woord en Daad understands 'family' primarily the household, where people not only share the same accommodation and table, but are also connected by birth, adoption, or marriage.<sup>5</sup> In the reality of development cooperation, other strong (family) relations are quite important as well. Relations that tie people together and imply mutual responsibilities for each other's wellbeing. The strength of such ties depends on the context.

### **Gender**

'Gender' covers the way in which societies shape 'masculinity' and 'femininity' into roles and responsibilities for men and women. Next to biological differences between men and women, cultures also have their own vision on how the sexes relate to each other, which roles might fit men or women better, and what is considered 'normal'. In addition, cultures shape power relationships and differ in how these power relationships support or coerce people in(to) certain roles.

### **Gender analysis**

In our context analyses preceding new projects we collect information about men and women separately: which roles and responsibilities do people have? Which constraints and challenges do they face? How would people want to develop further and what are the different needs of men and women to do so? The purpose of Gender analysis is to see how men's and women's different roles, opportunities and needs could be met in a project. Moreover, age, level of income, ethnic group, and disabilities can be taken into account as well.

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<sup>4</sup> Idem

<sup>5</sup> Polinder, Simon, *Een Onderzoek Naar Gezinsbeleid In Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, P.5.

**Gender equality**

Gender equality may mean both 'of equal dignity' and 'the same'. While biological differences have their consequences for role divisions or gender -specific needs, gender equality refers to the situation in which women and men enjoy equal status, conditions and responsibilities, and have equal opportunities for realizing their full human rights and potential. Likewise, we aim for that women and men are reached, benefit, and are empowered by our interventions. Gender equality encompasses equality in social relations and equal access to, and control over, resources by women and men. Our work thus focuses on the 'equal dignity' perspective.

**Gender mainstreaming**

We strive to integrate the needs and experience of men and women in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Woord en Daad's policy and programmes. All people, regardless of sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age or social stance will be treated with equal dignity.<sup>6</sup>

**Gender sensitive**

The mindset required to work with different groups and adapt your approach to them. We work with due attention to the different needs of men and women, boys and girls, families and communities.

**Transformative approach**

In each project area, we want to work towards equal treatment of men and women, boys and girls together with the people themselves. As a consequence of sin having come into the world, many cultures keep up patterns of suppression and exploitation. To address this and work towards a better situation is what we call transformation. Transformative approaches change negative social norms, influence the status quo address power inequalities. Our methodology is to spark cooperation, seek open discussions about values, and together look for possible changes to the good. Our Biblical perspective is that men and women complement one another as well as their community and environment on the basis of equality, freedom, and responsibility.<sup>7</sup> Coming to this point may be a long term process in which a crucial role lies with the community.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> World Vision, Gender Training Toolkit, Second Edition, 2008, P 88, Op Basis Van: Patricia Morris, The Gender Audit: A Process For Organizational Self-Assessment And Action Planning. (Washington, Dc: Commission On The Advancement Of Women, Interaction, 1999).; Prisma, Gender in Development: Prisma Paper on Gender – A Contribution to Reflection and Policy, Utrecht, April 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Prisma, Gender in Development: Prisma Paper on Gender – A Contribution to Reflection and Policy, Utrecht, April 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken in mondelinge toelichting op ARC fonds, 2016.

*And God created man in His image  
in the image of God did He make them  
He created them man and women.  
Genesis 1: 27*

**'Gender' within Woord en Daad**

What 'suits' a man or a woman is appreciated differently in different cultures. These understandings influence people's potential to blossom. In many cases, even, unjust differences emerge as a consequence, for example when widows are being expelled from the land they always cultivated, because women traditionally have never used to own any land. In working on 'Gender', Woord en Daad Foundation wants to ensure men and women will get equal opportunities under equal circumstances and that due attention is given to specific needs of these target groups.

In focusing on 'Gender and Family' Woord en Daad Foundation acknowledges the importance of family structures on people's individual and social development and seeks to embed this in policy and projects. Woord en Daad views 'Gender' in development cooperation as flowing from relationships between men and women, boys and girls on the basis of their uniqueness as created beings, in the context of their families and communities, as well as in the context of their mindset regarding social patterns.

**Gender equality from a Biblical perspective**

Woord en Daad founds its Gender policy explicitly upon the Biblical salvation history and concludes men and women were created in the image of God together, equal of value. In this Biblical perspective, men and women complement one another, both in family relationships as well as in society as a whole. Woord en Daad aims for men and women's equal development, equally valuable opportunities and societal positions, and for equality in relationships, also for people with specific disabilities.

**Mainstreaming**

Our approach is one of *gender mainstreaming*: We strive to integrate the concerns and experiences of men and women in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Woord en Daad's policies, projects and programmes. All people, regardless of sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age or social position, will be treated with the same regard: equal in equal situations, if inequalities persist we may choose to invest more to offer equal opportunities to specific groups of people.

**An open dialogue**

Situations that harm or put at risk women and girls or men and boys specifically, should be discussed in an open dialogue aiming at an improvement of mutual relations and the social position of the group of people at risk. In our search for better opportunities for people to blossom, we respect cultural context. At the same time, we strive to move men and women support one another enthusiastically and enable one another to take up responsibilities and freely serve their neighbor (Biblically speaking).

**A transformative approach**

Ultimately, Woord en Daad wishes to see a sustainable system change (or transformation) towards equality work out in the lives of men and women. Such a transformation often requires behaviour and/or mindset change, as repression and exploitation may exist in a specific context. As these situations are a consequence of our fall into sin, we pray and work towards transformation, which we know is a long-term process and is, ultimately, a grace of God.